

"Break The Chains"

Good Afternoon. My name is Ras Baraka and I want to announce my candidacy for Newark Mayor. I am 24 years old. I was born in Newark. I am the son of of Amiri and Amina Baraka, two well known activist-artists in this city. I am a graduate in political science from Howard University, class of 1991.

I was active in student politics at Howard and was a leading force in the opposition and rejection of National Republican Chairman Lee Atwater's attempt to sit on the Howard University Board of Trustees in 1989.

Later, I was elected Vice President of the Howard University Student Association, the student government. Since then I have been teaching the 8th grade in Newark's Warren Street School.

I have already collected several thousand petitions for my campaign as Newark's Mayor. I felt I needed to run for Mayor at the urging of many of Newark's young people who felt that not only was the city not moving forward progressively, but that there was very little hope for the youth and young adults in the city. Not only that, but in the climate of distinct mediocrity, inertia, well advertised corruption in city government and the police department, it had gotten very dangerous for most of the city's residents.

So I am running my campaign on the basis of a strong responsible Youth Movement, with the steady hand of concerned elders to transform this city of my birth. Our slogans are "Whats Gonna Happen? The City's Gonna Change Hands" and "Break The Chains".

Yes, admittedly, I am a young man. I have the energy and vision of youth. I was away at school while various promises made by the older politicians were not kept, and Newark's citizens were betrayed again and again. I came back home and am a witness to the terrifying poverty, ignorance and cynicism that uglify this city's physical and moral landscape. It has made me and my generation sad. That not only have the older residents been betrayed, but the youth betrayed as well.

I watch as the old projects of my youth are blown up as campaign events for mediocre bureaucrats whose lack of action and compassion for the people left old wrecked slums for our citizens to live in while they played around with the federal funds meant to build housing, and had fun at the peoples expense. They are still having fun at the peoples expense. I see them dancing in the street midnights for pornographic tv monsters. But still I see no housing, except cardboard boxes that will be slums even before the newly born

can go to school. Every Newark resident is entitled to a decent place to live in the city. Yet homelessness remains and we pay millions of dollars a year to unscrupulous business men to house the homeless in hotels, while several of our city's bureaucrats have more than one house. The mayor of Newark owns enough houses for several people to live in yet we see people lying in the street with no where to go.

And what about the schools? The mayor will tell you the problem is that he has no control over the schools. That we should give up our right to democratically elect a school board so he can be the mediocre dictator of our childrens' education.

The mayor will not come out against Take Over by the right wing juggernaut in Trenton. He will not speak out against the governor whose own brother and campaign manager Ed Rollins have lied that they repressed the black vote or told the truth that they repressed the black vote. Who can be sure which and does it matter? We know their intent is evil. Why should we let them take over our schools, and why doesn't the mayor say anything, but sit on the fence grinning ominously.

The people of Newark must have control over the education of their children. They must have an elected school board. But the qualifications for being on that Board must be changed. I believe that those best qualified to run the schools are the parents with children in school, the teachers, the school workers, high school seniors, proven educators. Not just idle pimps and lying political hacks whose only goal is to pick the gold out of the education budget and maintain the control of our children's education by visionless greedy bureaucrats.

We are made sad, but we also know we must fight. Fred Douglass said, without struggle there is no progress. So we know we must struggle and we know we will win.

People, we have to stop the war on the youth! That is why my campaign is at base a youth movement with the guidance of wise elders. We must stop condemning the youth and energize them to help us transform the city. We must give them education, employment and recreation. Without Education, Employment and Recreation, we cannot lower the crime rate. We can only oppose crime with Education, Employment and Recreation.

The people must run the schools. Another of the most important tasks of city government is to employ the people of the city. We must transform every bureau and department in the city into places where more of our citizens can be employed. We must initiate residency laws in city government, including the police department, including the police director, so that more Newark residents can be hired.

We must urge the creation of new small business, and move to make the principal city vendors local companies, city owned businesses. We must rationalize the salaries of

all city employees so that more people can be hired and more people trained.

A high school diploma must equip our youth to public employment in our city. And we must stop the police murders and police violence, we must encourage community based policing not just wild 911 chases through the city. We must call for a Civilian Police Review Board to monitor the police, to stop police violence and corruption. To save our youth. Most citizens know the police are as involved with the drug traffic in our city as the pushers. The present mayor says he no longer opposes a civilian police review board. Let him speak out loud and clear. Everyone from Mayor Dinkins to Minister Farrakhan supports a police review board. The people will too. And let our policemen come from Newark and live in Newark so that there is more accountability. Less fatalities. More sympathetic presence.

In all the key areas of Health, Senior Citizens, Arts & Culture I have a very developed platform which the press is invited to take with them and read. We want to create a central Youth Office to transform our youth problems to youth incentives and help transform our city.

We want public Daycare centers staffed by the unemployed and the senior citizens. We want Artists In Residence in the schools and more self reliance of the schools and city agencies and the Senior housing too must include shops and stores and offices to make them more self reliant and the seniors more secure.

We must have a multinational curriculum in the school which can also help us attract new business and new jobs from the countries of our citizens' ethnic heritage. From Africa, Italy, Puerto Rico, Haiti, Portugal, Jamaica and the entire mighty spectrum of our citizenry new jobs and new small business must be brought.

Education, Housing, Crime-Police-Prisons, Employment, Business, Taxes and Fiscal Democracy, Transportation Welfare, Labor, Senior Citizens, Youth, Women, Arts & Culture...our campaign will touch all of them.

It is no secret that not so mysterious forces have been making it difficult for us to register as a candidate and have accused us of committing a crime by being an undergraduate at Howard University. But today, I am happy to report that has all been cleared up. My campaign manager has spoken to Essex County Prosecutor Clifford Minor, Commissioner of Registration and Supt of Elections, Casciano, and Robert Vorasco, City Clerk that I am finally clear of all obstructions and can go about the business of seeing that the city changes hands. Thank you. Questions?